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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Guide us, great God, for we are pilgrims in this land. We are weak, but You are mighty. Guide us with Your powerful hands. Transform our memory so that whenever we encounter challenges, we will recall how You have blessed us in the past.

Today give our lawmakers insight to discern truth from untruth, the high from the low, and the enduring from the transient. May they discern truth through the illumination of Your sacred Word. May they know the high from the low through Your Holy Spirit's guidance. And may they distinguish the enduring from the transient by numbering their days and becoming more aware of life's brevity. Strong Deliverer, continue to be a shield for America.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this week promises to be a busy one. Just across the street, an important ObamaCare case will be argued before

the Supreme Court, and tomorrow, here in the Capitol, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu will address a joint session of Congress. It is an important speech that comes at a very important time. Iran's longstanding determination to develop nuclear capabilities poses a threat to Israel, America, and the world. It is a threat Netanyahu is singularly capable of explaining at such a critical moment in U.S.-Israeli relations.

Meanwhile, the new Senate will continue to pursue good ideas for the middle class. On the floor and in committee, both this week and in the weeks to come, we expect to see more bipartisan action on behalf of the American people on a range of issues, from human trafficking to the NLRB. For instance, we will offer Senators a chance to stand tall for basic fairness in the workplace by overturning the administration's ambush rule, which seeks to weaken workers' rights, and we will keep up the fight for sensible, bipartisan ideas such as the Keystone jobs bill.

This positive approach stands in stark contrast to the partisan posture we have seen from our friends on the other side of the aisle.

The President's veto of the bipartisan Keystone bill represents a victory for partisanship and for powerful special interests. The President's veto of the bipartisan Keystone bill represents a defeat for jobs, for infrastructure, and for the middle class. That is why Congress needs to try and overturn it.

We had hoped to have that vote tomorrow, but for some reason Democrats are actually filibustering that vote. It takes 67 votes to overcome a veto, more than the 60 required to overcome a filibuster. So there is no reason for a filibuster, other than to cause delay and gridlock simply for its own sake.

It is certainly disappointing. But the new Congress won't be deterred from fighting for jobs and the middle class.

We will keep fighting for this good idea, and we will keep fighting for other good ideas.

We will also keep up our fight to fund the Department of Homeland Security. The people watched Democrats filibuster Homeland Security funding for weeks. On Friday they watched Democrats—including many who implied they would actually do something about the President's overreach—filibuster a commonsense bill from Senator COLLINS. Now Americans are learning that Democrats might even try and prevent the Senate and the House of Representatives from reconciling their bills to get the Department funded. It just doesn't make any sense, especially when we consider the words of the minority leader himself. He said that going to conference "has been the custom in the Senate and the House of Representatives for more than 200 years." At 5:30 p.m. we will have a vote to do just that. We invite the minority leader and his party to join us in supporting this effort to go to conference.

It is interesting to see the distance between rhetoric and reality with some of our good friends on the other side—not just on conferencing bills, not just on addressing the President's overreach, but also with the use of the filibuster itself. Some of the folks who are now filibustering simply for the sake of delaying and causing gridlock are the same folks who used to denounce the use of the filibuster. It is easy to see that they really weren't very serious.

The truth is that a better way is possible for our colleagues. I invite our Democratic friends to drop all the negativity, drop all the gridlock, and join Republicans in advancing a positive agenda for the American people instead.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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